

# Digital Storytelling

Flora Iacchia

Today, schools are actively looking for new ways to enable their students to develop storytelling skills. These skills should empower children and young adults to practice collaborative learning on many levels, from reading and writing to painting and project management.

In this framework, digital painting provides educators with innovative avenues to develop storytelling skills. These tools can awaken and sustain the interest of students of various ages in many arenas such as creative play, art, calculus, history, science, biology, and computer use.

Today, a new breed of digital painting tools exist that allow students to strive toward their potentials by permitting the exploration of a wide range of educational topics via storytelling and digital painting.

These tools are available at a low cost on a subscription basis. This means that teachers can have a path to incorporate digital painting and storytelling into various topics.

This opportunity allows art teachers to embrace a holistic approach to teaching by integrating a variety of learning possibilities into each classroom experience. While stimulating the imagination and creativity, digital painting enables students to develop knowledge in many areas simultaneously.



The advantage of these tools is that they allow schools to promote learning on a variety of levels and to encourage students to expand their thinking across a range of disciplines, both in an integrated way and through teamwork.

## Suggestions for the Classroom

Developing storytelling skills through digital painting enables students to develop their creative power while having fun because they can paint multiple versions of an artwork on the computer while mastering a variety of topics.

This can be accomplished in basic calculus by allowing students to digitally paint one cow, then two birds, then three pigs, and so on. In history, students can digitally paint the Freedom Trail, and, in class, make a mural that tells the story of its role in the American Revolution.

Digital painting helps to transform the roles of educators by allowing them to broaden their lessons and increase their freedom in teaching a variety of topics.

So, how can educators incorporate digital painting and storytelling in the classroom today?

- Invest in digital painting tools.
- Explore with students what topics they would like to learn through digital painting and storytelling. This way, students can participate in the teaching experience and make the activity successful.
- Explore the possibility of setting up a

task force incorporating the art educators in order to facilitate the educational experience on multiple levels.

- Find ways to display the digital art students have produced in the classroom in order to recognize student achievement.

## Conclusion

Teachers who want to incorporate digital painting and storytelling into the classroom can make use of the available tools. Take advantage of the new, cost-effective educational software available, and access to computer equipment and facilities. Exploring new technology is a worthwhile effort for schools that want to achieve innovation and foster multidisciplinary learning. ☺

*Flora Iacchia is a digital artist residing in Fairfax, Virginia. She teaches digital painting and storytelling and is also the author of many children's books illustrated with her digital paintings, available on CD-ROM. Contact floribert@aol.com.*